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ABSTRACT

The authors offer remedial techniques which might help counselors to deal with children with learning disabilities. Ninety-five percent of children with learning disabilities suffer difficulties in the visual and auditory modalities. Children with visual problems may experience difficulties in visual discrimination, visual-motor coordination and visual memory. In the auditory modality, a child may suffer from difficulties in auditory discrimination and auditory memory. The authors describe several remedial techniques to treat each of the mentioned learning disabilities, adopting a team approach to the problem. Before a child is treated, an effort is made to determine the specific nature and degree of his impairment. The latter is accomplished by the administration of achievement, and other appropriate visual and auditory tests as well as by the completion of a questionnaire by the teacher describing the details of the problem. Afterwards, the teacher, the counselor, the reading specialist and other specialists consult together and prepare a detailed program for remedying the specific difficulty faced. The program is carried out in a special room called the "resource room." Periodically, similar consultations are held to assess the progress made and to plan new approaches, if necessary. (Author/SE)

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NEW COUNSELOR STRATEGIES--IMPLEMENTING LEARNING DISABILITY PROGRAMS

Rosalyn Klein, Brenda Youngblood

Hazelwood School District

The emphasis of our program is the counselor's role in the area of learning disabilities. An often neglected aspect of counselor training is exposure to this area. Many counselors have difficulty providing effective counseling services to their staff, to the children in their school, and to parents in the community because of a lack of knowledge and techniques in the learning disabilities area. There is a critical need for counselors to become familiar with guidelines on how to be effective change agents in this specialized field. This presentation will provide counselors with the skills they need to implement effective programs for learning disabled children.

This is a two part program describing identification and remediation of learning disabilities. The first part is a presentation of a workshop which counselors can use with their staff. It includes an explanation of visual, auditory, language, and motor disabilities. In addition, assessment techniques will be described.

For the second part of the program, we emphasize the flexibility of a counselor's role by describing the use of two different approaches with an elementary school that have been successful in working with learning disabled children. Method I includes a team approach, with the utilization of a resource room. It will be explained how to use a resource room with children who have learning disabilities. Method II emphasizes team problem-solving and teacher participation. The strategies explained will be the use

CG 010 107

of a learning disability inventory, training methods, and measuring techniques.

To illustrate the above ideas, there will be a slide presentation showing the use of materials in the resource room and classroom. Materials will also be displayed at the program.

The audience will be provided with all forms used by the counselor; and, in addition an outline of the program and an assessment of remediation techniques will be included. (Time will be allowed for questions and answers.)

NOTE: We have enclosed a paper which will provide you with a detailed description of our program.

Brenda Youngblood

Elementary Counselor

Hazelwood School District

New Counselor Strategies--Implementing Learning Disability Programs

A method to enable counselors to implement learning disability programs was designed. Self contained special education programs are frequently not appropriate for the large number of children with learning problems. Usually the counselor and teacher are not prepared to develop programs for learning disabled children in the regular classroom. There is thus a need for counselors to develop programs in which teachers can learn the skills to help learning disabled children. This presentation defines the methods a counselor can utilize to accomplish this. The strategies discussed in this presentation include identifying and remediating auditory and visual problems. Insight into the areas of visual discrimination, visual motor, visual memory, auditory discrimination, auditory memory are required to do this effectively. To enhance the audience's understanding of these ideas, they will be given the opportunity to discover their dominant channel of learning by participating in activities. Then a discussion will follow on the approach used in my school when working with teachers about learning disabled children. This is a team approach with the utilization of a resource room. Emphasis is on providing the audience with practical and useful ideas which they can apply in their schools.

Rosalyn Klein

Elementary Counselor

Hazelwood School District

New Counselor Strategies--Implementing Learning Disability Programs

An innovative way for counselors to implement learning disability programs is described. Traditionally, counselors and teachers were not involved in identifying and remediating learning disabilities. The child was referred to special personnel, and often the teacher believed her responsibility for that child ended with the referral. This process did not encourage the child's success with his academic work in the classroom; so, in the past, teachers and counselors have not effectively helped learning disabled children. We have developed a method counselors can utilize in their schools to assist teachers in helping learning disabled children. A discussion about the need for this method will be presented at the beginning of the program. Part of this method includes identifying, assessing and remediating learning disabilities, as well as being familiar with the channels through which children learn. Language and motor disabilities will be emphasized in this presentation. After the presentation of the main types of learning disabilities is given, a description of the consultation process that is followed in my school will be presented. It is based on two main premises: team problem-solving, and teacher participation. The strategies include the use of learning disabilities inventory, training methods, and measuring techniques. Skills and strategies will be presented to the audience.

NEW COUNSELOR STRATEGIES--IMPLEMENTING LEARNING DISABILITY PROGRAMS

The emphasis of our program is the counselor's role in the area of learning disabilities. This paper will discuss our rationale for presenting a program, the objectives we wish to accomplish, and a description of what the program will entail.

Local, state, and federal agencies have devoted much attention and funds towards improving the education of children with learning problems. A bureau in the United States Office of Education was established in recent years to focus attention on educational needs of handicapped children and to dispense funds for research, teacher preparation, and program development. We would like to motivate other professionals to initiate corrective programs which we have found effective for learning disabled children who are in a regular classroom setting.

An often neglected aspect of counselor training is exposure to the field of learning disabilities. Many counselors have difficulty providing effective counseling services to their staff, to the children in their school, and to parents in the community because of a lack of knowledge and techniques in the learning disabilities areas. There is a critical need for counselors to become familiar with guidelines on how to be effective change agents in this specialized area.

We feel our district has encouraged us to investigate and to utilize various methods and materials in the area of learning disabilities. Through our work as elementary school counselors, we have developed a three-fold program addressed to meeting these needs. Our presentation will be a description of this program which will provide counselors with skills and

strategies they can implement in their own school setting.

As learning disabilities have become a focal point in the elementary schools, we have found that many teachers believe they are inexperienced and often incapable of working with learning disabled children, and often recommend they have special classroom placement. For some children this is an appropriate solution, but through our experiences of working with learning disabilities, we have found for many of them the regular classroom setting is very appropriate when they are provided with opportunities to be successful. We feel it is the counselor's responsibility to provide the elementary school teachers with skills so they may be effective in working with learning disabled children.

Our major objective in this program is to teach counselors skills they need to meet this challenge. We will accomplish this by defining learning disabilities, presenting a workshop, and describing remediation techniques and their application. We will also emphasize the flexibility of a counselor's role by describing the use of two different approaches within an elementary school.

Through our research in this area, we have found many authors who emphasize the need for special programs for learning disabled children. A recent study (Ozer & Richardson, 1974) has shown there is a need for diagnostic data which would enhance children's learning within the regular classroom. They developed a new examination protocol which deals more clearly with a number of educational strategies. This examination protocol is referred to as the Neuro-Developmental Observation. (NDO) Its objective is to embody a limited number of easily understood educational strategies in a set of prototype tasks. The decisions derived do not support the existence of a particular diagnostic category of the traditional sort. Rather a

statement is derived as to which strategies seem to work. Diagnosis, therefore, is a process during which one samples what works.

Another study (Baker & Raskin, 1973) investigated the influence of multi-sensory integration and sensory equivalence on the perception and recognition of letter forms by learning disabled children. They stated that the goal of all strategies used to educate the learning disabled child is to find ways of presenting material that will maximize perception, learning, and retention. Many of the approaches are based on the assumption that the integrated use of two or more sensory modalities is the most effective technique.

Hallenbeck (1974) discusses problems teachers may have in presenting social studies to students with learning disabilities. She states: "A student's poor reading ability, deficient memory, visual spacial disturbances, and lack of understanding of abstract ideas are likely to interfere greatly with learning." She suggests techniques and ideas in coping with these problems; for example, using prepared tapes of reading material, making concrete creative projects, developing games to make difficult abstract experiences practical experiences for the child, and map-making on a small scale.

Estes and Huizinga (1974) supported the idea that with learning disabled children both learning and re-learning were greater using visual presentations. Their evidence tends to indicate that the visual channel produces greater learning for young children as well as for the learning disabled and mentally retarded, while the auditory is preferred for children with high I.Q.'s. It should be noted that the superiority of the visual over the auditory channel has only been demonstrated using line drawings of objects as stimuli and has not been demonstrated using other types of visual stimuli such as printed or written word.

William M. Cruickshank, Ph.D. summed things up very well during an address given at Learning Disabilities Symposium, National Rehabilitation Training Institute, Miami Beach, Florida, October 26, 1971. In his address entitled, "Some Issues Facing the Field of Learning Disability," he stated: *Education for perceptually impaired children with specific learning disabilities cannot afford to go the route of another field of special education. Community warnings are here for us to read. There is an urgency around us today for quality programs for these children. If we ignore them we commit professional suicide; if we recognize them and do something about them in behalf of children, we reach the apex of professional responsibility and function.* (P. 388)

To establish the way we handle learning disabilities and to show the methods we use in working with teachers, we will explain the workshop intended for an elementary school staff. We hope to provide the skills to enable the audience to present this workshop in their school. The following information will be included in our presentation.

Many children with learning disabilities are unsuccessful in school. These children can be successful for there are many techniques that will enable them to learn the information and skills they lack. Our techniques include strengthening their weak areas, working through their strong areas, and utilizing more effective methods of teaching.

To facilitate a teacher's understanding of the process that takes place in the classroom, we call the channels through which a child learns "modalities." These modalities or receptive channels are: (a) Visual, (b) Auditory, (c) Gustatory, (d) Kinesthetic, (e) Olafactory. A teacher gives the child the opportunity to use most of these modalities throughout the day. A learning disabled child, however, does not learn equally well

through the five modalities. Since 80% of our population are visual learners and 15% are auditory learners, we will first focus on the visual and auditory sensory channels, with which the majority of learning disabled children have difficulty. Often defective discrimination and recall through the visual and auditory channels causes problems in the development of language and motor skills. Many children have learning disabilities in the language and motor areas, so we will discuss these types of learning disabilities also. (We have some activities to do with the audience to illustrate the differences between auditory and visual learners. The audience will have the opportunity to identify their own dominant channel of learning.)

The learning disabled child that we are talking about today has:

(a) Adequate I.Q.

(b) Low achievement

(c) Uneven learning pattern

He does some tasks very well, and others very poorly, so it is wise to look for outstanding discrepancies in his performance. Teachers can make accurate decisions concerning instruction when they have knowledge about the full range of learner characteristic. Knowledge of how a student learns includes knowing which receptive channels are operative for a given type of stimulus and knowing which receptors are less effective for receiving similar stimuli. We emphasize improving achievement in academic skill areas as the main goal in understanding how a child learns best.

A child with visual problems may experience a variety of difficulties. These difficulties might be in visual discrimination, whereby a child often confuses shapes, letters, and words, for he can not differentiate likenesses and differences between printed symbols or objects. Thorough instruction in

visual discrimination of words, as well as practice exercises in finding similar letters and words, sorting tasks, and matching activities may result in improved reading performance.

Problems of visual discrimination are also characterized by failure to distinguish figures from backgrounds. Students with this problem often lack the ability to find and focus on a math problem or word on a filled page; they skip lines when reading and are often easily distracted by stimuli on the page, such as a spot in the paper. To improve their achievement, it may help to put their math problems or reading words on individual cards, so they can focus on one at a time. Other techniques to improve figure ground discrimination are practice activities, such as, tracing with two connecting shapes, walking on one line when two different color lines are present, and recognizing figures against a variety of backgrounds.

Another visual problem is in the visual motor area. These children exhibit difficulty copying from the board or a book, keeping on the line while writing, co-ordinating eye-hand movements, and duplicating the order of a sequence of pictures or geometric designs. They will encounter less frustration with their work if the teacher puts Elmers Glue on the lines of their paper to keep them on the line. Also, they need practice in tracing and copying, copying letters by joining appropriate dots, and copying sequences of beads.

Defective visual memory is a frequent problem. Reproducing symbols previously seen, remembering names of words and letters, and recalling spelling words are symptoms of a child with visual memory problems. Some remediation techniques include word card drill (holding up a word for three seconds, covering it, and having the child write the letters he remembers),

duplicating designs from memory, and recalling placement of objects from memory (placement of triangle on line.) Using shorter spelling words until the child's memory skills increase would help him be more successful.

The second important modality is the auditory channel. Problems in auditory learning can be present even when hearing acuity is within the normal range. These difficulties include auditory discrimination and recall of auditorily received stimuli. Difficulties in auditory discrimination are reflected in mispronunciations of common words, confusion of similar sounds, and inability to distinguish words over background noise. The relevance of such discrimination to speaking and reading is important because those sounds that are imprecisely heard are not learned correctly. The following remediation techniques have proved to be beneficial: repeating sounds after the teacher says them; training with exaggerated emphasis on initial, vowel, and ending sounds; listening to teacher directions with a record playing in the background; and drilling on rhymes to develop accurate recognition of sounds and sound sequence, which is helpful for auditory memory as well.

The other prevalent auditory problem is auditory memory. Children with auditory memory problems frequently cannot remember sounds and words, and cannot remember directions of more than one or two steps. Activities to help train auditory memory are exercises in carrying out short and simple directions, exercises in recalling sounds, letters, and words, and exercises in listening for specific directions. (Game "Directional Dismissal" to be explained at program.)

We have discussed many remediation techniques, but before training can begin, a child's success level needs to be determined. Assessment of the expressions of learning is necessary to determine if the student expresses

academic content that presumably was assimilated through certain sensory channels. Instructionally relevant information about expressions of learning should be clearly related to skill areas that are defective. A child, for example, with a problem of reading should be assessed with reading material. It is insufficient to assume that similar processes are involved in recognizing, for instance, differences among geometric design when in fact poor achievement is noted in a failure to discriminate words. Listed below is the procedure for assessing a child's sensory channels:

(a) Select material from an academic skill area in which the child is having difficulty, using known and unknown material.

(b) Set criterion level below which performance will be considered inadequate.

(c) Present the student with the task.

(d) Continue to examine his skills until he reaches criterion level of adequate performance.

(e) Begin training at this level.

To illustrate this more clearly, the assessment procedure for visual memory is described:

(a) Material selected consists of five word cards with two-letter words on each card.

(b) Criterion level is four out of five words recalled.

(c) Present selected material to the child and tell him to look carefully at the selection because it will be removed and he will be asked to identify it from among other materials.

(d) After a pre-arranged time interval remove the card and present another set of materials containing similar items with the previous material embedded. Have the subject select those items that were shown to him on the card.

(e) If child is successful with the task, present same task with three-letter words and continue this process until the criterion level is reached; on the other hand, if he is unsuccessful with the two-letter task present cards with one-letter.

Results from this assessment will suggest the place to begin remedial teaching, and suggest the emphasis that should be placed upon the modality, and the extent to which heavy reliance on a modality detracts from learning. This skill analysis can also be used in the areas of language and motor skills to determine remediation level.

A language disability is often recognized by a child's inability to put ideas into spoken words. This child may also have difficulty speaking in complete sentences, and using grammar and syntax appropriately. He often lacks spontaneity in responding verbally.

Some activities to remediate these problems include oral reading games, which require modified repetition on the part of the child, i.e.,

Teacher: I will go to town.

Child: And I will go too.

Sentence completion games to encourage correct grammar are good practice, i.e.,

Teacher: Here is an apple.

Here are two _____ (apples).

Pictures of objects can accompany the game. Another activity is identifying the sentence which is structurally correct from several sentences, which are all identical in meaning. This presentation can be both auditory and visual. Describing a picture and telling a story about it is good training.

The last area discussed is motor skills. Children with poor motor skills are often identified by poor handwriting or drawing, and poor motor co-ordination when catching or throwing at a target. They often have difficulty imitating children in games, and expressing ideas through movement and gesture.

This child needs practice exercises for laterality, directionality, spacial orientation and body image; included would be specific exercises in right, left discrimination, identifying right and left parts on self, instructor, and pictures; drawing and tracing of various figures, i.e., stick, human, and geomtric; and tracing and printing the alphabet. Other activities include exercises throwing and catching, imitation of a teacher demonstrated body movement of an animal, such as an elephant, and pantomime games. Motor encoding, auditory memory, and auditory decoding can all be combined by giving the child a series of instructions to follow such as "salute the flag, walk like a duck." The child must understand what is said, remember the correct sequence, and be able to sort out the expected responses.

After giving this overview of detection and remediation procedures for learning disabilities, we will make a presentation on the process we follow in our own schools in consulting with teachers about children who

have learning disabilities. Our approach at Russell School is a team-approach by the special personnel and the utilization of a resource room.

As an elementary school counselor, I have been very concerned about those children who performed poorly academically, even though their mental abilities indicated otherwise. I have found teachers to be very disturbed over the fact that a student had the potential to learn but was not. Invariably, that student was always referred to me for testing. On many occasions, a student needed the help of an outside source, which involved our Special School District. Many times a student referred to Special School District was rejected and the school had to provide help for that child. It was during these times that I needed some improved method of helping a child to learn.

The reading specialist, instructional specialist, and myself came up with the idea to have a special room (which is later stated as a resource room) that could be used by those children who have learning disabilities. We are mostly concerned with the primary children to prevent later difficulties, focusing on the weak areas indicated by the teacher and the test results. Many varied materials and approaches which will be discussed, are used to help the child to overcome his difficulties.

Our resource room program is defined as a means for providing children having disabilities with direct services for short segments of time during the day. Depending on the child's needs, his time in the resource room varies. The resource room program attempts to show specific ways all teachers can adapt to more effectively provide appropriate instruction for more children.

Some important features of the resource room include: placement, which will be decided by the team of specialists; management which will be

accomplished by the staff members allotting a certain percentage of their time to the resource room; and scheduling of the children which will be done so that no more than six children will be in the room with a team member at any one time.

Advantages of the resource room are as follows: (a) Children can be kept in the mainstream of the school. There is no stigma attached to going to the resource room for assistance. (b) There is no need to label children placed into the program as traditionally happens in special education programs. (c) There is a greater flexibility in instructional methods.

At the onset, classroom teachers refer to the counselor those children who she/he feels have a particular learning problem. Because of the workshop that introduced the teachers to learning disabilities, she/he has a pool of information to draw from in detecting a learning disability. Then the counselor gives the student various tests, for example, the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children and Wide Range Achievement Test. The student is also tested by the reading specialist who then gives a reading test like the Durrell. A questionnaire listing characteristics of a learning disabled child is given by the counselor to the teacher. To utilize the information obtained on the student from the tests and the questionnaire, the counselor then meets with the other special teachers to determine what type of instruction would best suit the child's needs. Instruction coincides with what is being taught in his regular classroom. Also, we inform the parents of the difficulty that his child is experiencing and the special help he will receive. There is generally more parental support for a resource room program than some other options existing in a typical school.

As stated before, various materials are used in the resource room to help a child overcome his or her handicap. These materials help the child overcome difficulties in the visual, auditory, language, and motor areas as they apply to reading, math, and spelling. For example, if a first grade teacher finds a child having difficulty in the auditory area (cannot distinguish the sounds of the alphabet), his program would be designed in the following way provided the child does not have a physical impairment.

(a) Ten minutes during the morning would be spent on the Language Master using a limited number of letters.

(b) He is then tested by a team member to check his progress.

(c) Ten minutes is devoted to instruction with a team member along with another child having the same problem.

(d) Five minutes is devoted to the use of a tape recorder along with a specific worksheet.

(e) Child returns in the afternoon to reinforce what has been learned during the morning.

A child is taken from his regular classroom at certain scheduled times. He works by prescribed assignments and records are kept on his progress. The child is re-evaluated periodically, at which time the counselor and the other special teachers either terminate or continue his instruction in the resource room depending on his progress.

The resource room is used throughout the school year. The counselor and the other special personnel continuously work with different children in the room. In utilizing this approach, the counselor feels that more

children are reached when it comes to overcoming learning problems.

The other approach to learning disabilities, used at Garrett School, is based on two main premises; team problem-solving, and teacher participation. The team consists of the reading specialist, the instructional specialist, and myself, the counselor. We work together with the primary teachers in planning programs for children with learning disabilities. Teacher participation is accomplished by including her in all phases of the process: diagnosing, training, measuring. I will now explain each phase of this process.

During our initial contact with a teacher we try to specifically identify some of the problems the child is experiencing. If we determine this child has a learning disability, I explain to the teacher the purpose and the use of the learning disability inventory, and suggest she administer it to the child before our next conference, for which we set a date. Prior to our second conference, the reading specialist or I may observe the child, or test him depending on the needs of the child.

The purpose of the inventory is to involve the teacher in the detection and remediation process. If she feels a part of this process, I believe that she will be more willing to use training activities with the child in the classroom. It provides the teacher with a quick screening device which can help pinpoint the child's area of difficulty. It requires approximately ten minutes to administer, and can be given to one child or a small group of children. (I will review the inventory with the audience.) The workshop has provided the teacher with the background information necessary for this team process.

At our second consultation, we combine our information about the child, using the inventory as a guide. For demonstration purposes, I will use the

example of a second grade child who cannot remember his reading and spelling words. We determined through the inventory that he has visual memory problems; difficulty with immediate recall of stimuli. Before we can plan the training activities which is the next step, the teacher needs to determine what the child is able to recall visually, i.e., can he remember one letter words or two letter words. To accomplish this, she uses the assessment procedure explained in the workshop.

At our third consultation, having the child's success level defined, we can plan the activities to train his visual memory and modification of his classroom work. Now I want to discuss some important aspects of the training process that I review with the teacher.

For the training to be effective, I stress three points:

(a) Using materials for training that are part of the child's present academic work.

(b) Timing of the training sessions.

(c) Measuring the progress.

The training will stimulate academic progress more readily if the material used is that which the child is currently working on. It is more effective for the training to be done twice each day for three minutes at a time than for six minutes once a day. A child's success at each training session should be charted, so we can measure the impact the training is having, and so the child can receive instant feedback. One of the strongest motivators in class is success.

An example of a training plan would consist of five cards with two-letter words on each card. The teacher or another child would hold up each card for three seconds, then cover it up while the child writes down what he remembers. The child would chart his success for the day. When he was

successful on four out of five cards the teacher could start replacing some of the two-letter words with three-letter words. An ancillary benefit of this training approach and many of the training techniques is that the children can do them without the aid of the teacher.

Teaching through the vision channel may require modification of instruction or less reliance on that sensory mode. So, in this session the teacher would also plan the ways that the child can be more successful in his work. If a child's visual discrimination is accurate even though his recall of symbols experienced visually is poor, the teacher may still wish to emphasize vision as a major mode for learning, but would build into the instruction mnemonic clues. She would also give him shorter spelling words, keep assignments written on the board until work time is over, and at times, give him oral questions, requiring one or two word answers. When appropriate, the child would also use teaching machines to reinforce the remediation: such as the Language Master. As his visual memory skills increase his work should become more difficult.

Our fourth consultation, two weeks later, would be an evaluation session to determine whether or not the child is making progress. This is determined by reviewing his chart, and receiving feedback from the teacher about his progress in his academic work. If he is not progressing, we analyze the situation and make a new plan. At any point in this consultation process we may see the necessity for referring the child to Special School District, which is an agency that provides the county schools with itinerant services and special classes. If he is making progress in the training sessions, and the teacher sees improvement in his work, we decide to either continue the same training or make specific plans for the next level of training.

I will continue to consult with a teacher as long as we both feel it is necessary. Some teachers can continue training the child, meeting with me and the reading specialist every two months to inform us of the child's progress; other teachers need more support, so we may continue to meet every two weeks. This team also meets with the parents of these children to inform them of the problem and their childrens' progress.

I would also like to mention that the reading specialist works with many of these children, and many of them do require counseling, but in all cases where the child stays in the regular classroom, we encourage the teacher to become an active participant in strengthening the child's weak areas, and becoming skilled in teaching through his strong modality. The workshop, the inventory, and the consultations provided by the counselor, are intended to give the regular classroom teacher guidelines and support so that she is able to participate in detecting and remediating the problems of the children with learning disabilities.

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